

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT UPDATE TASK FORCE  
TO THE LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**DATE:** 3 August 2004

**ATTENDANCE:**

<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Affiliation</b></u>
Ron Beam	RETTEW Associates, Inc.
Lois Herr	Lancaster County Planning Commission
Rev. Edward M. Bailey	Bethel Harambee Historical Services, Inc.
Virginia Brady	Lancaster County Planning Commission Region 3
Rita A. Byrne	Lancaster County Historic Preservation Trust
Frank Christoffel, III	Lancaster County Association of Realtors
Frank Christoffel, IV	Building Industry Association of Lancaster County
Rich Doenges	Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board
Charlie Douts	Lancaster County Planning Commission Region 2
Carolyn French	Fulton Bank
Ralph Goodno	Lancaster County Conservancy
Allan Granger	Lancaster County Planning Commission
Nancy Halliwell	Lancaster County Planning Commission Region 4
Caroline Hoffer	Barley, Snyder, Senft & Cohen
Rich Hurst	Hurst Brothers Development Company
Rick Jackson	ELA Group, Inc.
Karen Martynick	Lancaster Farmland Trust
Donald McNutt	Lancaster County Conservation District
Jim Miller	Miller-Warner Construction
Logan Myers	Warwick Township
Lilia Nice	Citizen
Randy Patterson	Lancaster County Housing & Redevelopment Authority
Diane Tannehill	Lancaster Community Indicators Project
Karen M. Weibel	Lititz Borough Planning Commission
Peter Whipple	Elizabethtown Borough Manager
Dan Zimmerman	Lancaster County Transportation Authority

**Others:** John R. Ahlfeld, Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee; Louis Nichols, Loudoun County's Senior Agricultural Economy Manager; and Warren Howell, Loudoun County's Agricultural Marketing Manager.

**Staff:** Scott Standish, Nancy J. Williams, Michael Domin, Mary Frey, Dean Severson, and Mari Rich.

**Absent:** Eugene Aleci, Thomas Baldrige, Dan Betancourt, Phyllis Campbell, Tom Despard, Julianne Dickson, Susan Eckert, John Fiorill, Randy Gockley, Jack Howell, Steven Iovino, G. Curtis Jones, Terry Kauffman, Karen Koncle, Donald Kraybill, Mike Kyle, Arthur Mann, Sr., Katina Musser, Wendy Nagle, David Nikoloff, Jay Parrish, Patrice Polite-Dixon, Steven Sawyer, Barry Smith, Tom Smithgall, Antonio Suarez, Steven Sylvester, Allen Taylor, Betty Tompos, and J. Scott Ulrich.

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

### 1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

Co-Chair Lois Herr called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m. and introduced Warwick Township Board of Supervisors Chair Logan Myers.

Welcome - Mr. Myers welcomed the Task Force to the Warwick Township Municipal Office.

Ms. Herr informed the Task Force that Co-Chair Ron Beam would preside over the meeting. She thanked the Task Force members for their participation, and reminded them that the meeting is scheduled to last until 1:00 PM.

Ms. Herr stated that the meeting is formatted as a workshop and will focus on Strategic Planning activities underway in Lancaster County that promote: (1) multi-municipal cooperation, (2) strong urban and suburban planning, and (3) the preservation of farmland and open space. In addition she stated that two guests from Loudoun County, Virginia would join the Task Force for a lunch-time discussion on a Rural Strategy that has been developed to preserve Loudoun County's farmland and related industries.

### 2. **Administrative Business:**

A. The July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were approved as drafted.

Mr. Beam stated that in the meeting handouts there are three newspaper articles which were printed in July by the ***Lancaster New Era***: (1) July 13, 2004 *Lancaster New Era* article titled "A Growing Concern" which discusses Lancaster County's new Growth Tracking Report; (2) July 14, 2004 *Lancaster New Era* article titled "A New Plan to Boost Farming" which discusses how the Update to the Growth Management element of the County's Comprehensive Plan is seeking to design a Rural Strategy for the County to ensure the preservation of farmland and the industry that our agricultural land supports; and (3) July 27, 2004 *Lancaster New Era* article titled "PA Dairy Farms in Big Trouble, Ag Economist Says" which discusses the financial future of small dairy farms vs. large dairy farms.

Mr. Beam informed the Task Force that an editorial about farmland located on the border of Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) was recently published in the newspaper. The editorial was written in response to the Agricultural Preserve Board's decision to modify its scoring criteria. Mr. Doenges stated that the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board recently changed the farm selection scoring system. He said that the new system will focus more on

preserving farms located near farms that are already preserved. Mr. Doenges stated that the strategy is to form clusters of preserved farms. He informed the Task Force that there will be less emphasis on preserving farms near UGAs.

#### B. Subcommittee Reports:

- 1) Public Involvement Subcommittee: Ms. French informed the Task Force that the Public Involvement Subcommittee would work closely with the consultant, and it would not be very active until a consultant is selected. In addition, as an effort to begin gathering contact information to assist with public outreach, she spoke with John McGrann from the Lancaster County Coalition for Smart Growth for a list of contacts.
- 2) Consultant Subcommittee: Mr. Jackson informed the Task Force that 7 proposals were submitted in response to the Request for Proposals. He stated that the Subcommittee would meet on August 4<sup>th</sup> to shortlist the proposal and begin the interview process. Mr. Jackson stated that the Consultant Subcommittee's goal is to recommend a consultant to the Task Force at its September meeting.

Plan Review Subcommittee: Mr. Zimmerman reviewed the Subcommittee's work with the Task Force. He discussed three strengths of the 1997 Plan Update –

- Growth Areas - Lancaster County is recognized as a leader in growth management.
- Agricultural / Open Space Protection and Preservation – Lancaster County has become #1 in Agricultural Preservation in the nation.
- Inter-municipal Cooperation / Regionalism – There has been an increase of inter-municipal cooperation and an increase in the number of multi-municipal plans that have been completed in the County.

Mr. Zimmerman also discussed the weaknesses of the 1997 Plan Update and outlined the Subcommittee's recommendations to strengthen the pending Plan Update:

- Plan Format – The 1997 Plan Update is not reader friendly. For the pending Plan Update, the Subcommittee recommends an implementation schedule, measurable growth management goals, and an executive summary be incorporated.
- Focus / Implementation - Implementation of the pending Plan Update needs to incorporate a broader range of stakeholders than the 1997 Plan Update.
- Visions for the Future – Development of new, visionary ideas for the boroughs and the City are needed in the pending Plan Update.
- Demographics / Trends – Demographic trends should be reflected in the pending Plan Update.
- Quality of Life – The pending Plan Update should emphasize the need for Quality of Life amenities.
- Land Development – The desired density ratio of 5.5 dwellings per acre in the 1997 Plan Update has not yet been reached but progress is occurring.
- Growth Management – Implementation of the growth management tools and techniques recommended in the 1997 Plan Update has been limited.

- Infrastructure – The pending Plan Update should support infrastructure development prior to or at the same rate as residential/industrial development.
- Agricultural / Rural Areas – The pending Plan Update needs to focus on managing growth outside established UGAs/VGAs.
- Economy – Economic Development needs to be addressed in the pending Plan Update.

### 3. Growth Tracking Report Overview:

LCPC Long-Range Principal Planner Mary Frey provided an overview of the *Lancaster County Growth Tracking Report* which was released on July 12, 2004. The following are highlights of the report:

- 2003 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Lancaster County's Growth Management Program.
- At the core of the County's Growth Management Program are Designated Growth Areas which were initiated in 1993 with the adoption of the ***Growth Management Element of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan***.
- In 1993, two Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) and 2 Village Growth Areas (VGAs) were established. By 2003, there were 13 UGAs and 26 VGAs in the County.
- Over the past 10 years, 31 townships, 18 boroughs, and the City have worked with the LCPC to establish Growth Areas.
- The *Growth Tracking Report* measures development which occurred in Lancaster County between 1994 and 2002.
- 11,100 acres were developed between 1994 and 2002 – 4,083 acres inside Growth Areas and 6,617 acres outside Growth Areas.
- The amount of new dwelling units built inside Growth Areas consumed less land than the new dwelling units built outside Growth Areas.
- 76% (13,657 dwellings) were built inside Growth Areas. 24% (4,212 dwellings) were built outside Growth Areas using 66% of all the land that was developed for residential use from 1994 to 2002.
- An average of 5.0 dwellings was built on each acre inside Growth Areas compared to less than one (0.8) dwelling built on each acre outside Growth Areas.
- LCPC believes that the percentage of development occurring inside Designated Growth Areas will increase over time. This trend should be reflected in future publications of the *Growth Tracking Report*.

Mr. Jackson stated that on page 12, the size of UGAs in the boroughs located in Central Lancaster County has been reduced. He asked for clarification on why an area where 44% of the growth within the County occurred would be reduced. Ms. Frey stated that the amount of land available in that area has decreased because of development.

Mr. Miller asked about the County's definition of developed land. He stated that according to the definition, if a house is built on a 10 acre wooded lot, the lot is no longer considered agricultural, but developed even though the trees have not been cleared for lawns. He stated that using the County's definition of developed land would change data on the amount of

land developed outside the Designated Growth Areas. Mr. Miller suggested that the County clarify what is considered developed land in order to avoid confusion.

Ms. Frey replied that developed means that the use has changed. She stated that the 10 acres is what most of the County's municipalities consider the minimum size for a farm in their ordinances. The County Growth Tracking system categorizes construction of a dwelling on a lot smaller than 10 acres in size as residential development. A parcel 10 acres or larger on which a dwelling is constructed is not counted as developed.

In addition, Mr. Beam stated that each municipality needs to look at the development that occurred outside the Designated Growth Areas and determine if the developed land changes the character of the land or the quality of life.

Mr. Miller asked about the methodology used to calculate the density ratio, and how the open space requirement is reflected in the calculations. Ms. Frey explained that the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) data is used to calculate the density. She stated that GIS uses individual parcels for the calculations and that open space is picked up as open space, not part of the development, and not part of the density calculation.

Mr. Miller commended LCPC for using "Designated Growth Areas" in the Growth Tracking Report. He stated that in an article concerning a local municipality one of the municipal officials made a statement in respect to UGAs. He said that the official suggested that the UGA could be expanded once the municipality is all built out. Ms. Frey stated that by the County's definition of a UGA, a UGA could be moved based on a comprehensive plan update. She said that changing the UGA is a planning decision that has to be made at the local municipal level.

Mr. Miller stated that land development potential, market flexibility, and infrastructure are not included in the report. He emphasized that there is a lack of approved or available lots for development, making it hard to create affordable housing in Lancaster County.

Rev. Bailey asked for clarification on the terminology that is used in the information that is distributed to the public. He stated that a lot of people in the general public think of Lancaster City when they hear the term "urban" used to identify an area within the County. He stated that a lot of people do not know that the term refers to more than the City. Ms. Williams stated that LCPC is working with a Lancaster Newspapers reporter and will work to inform him on these issues so that he can educate the public through his articles.

Mr. Hurst stated that there isn't a lot of land for sale within the UGAs. Ms. Frey stated that the availability of land inside the UGAs is something that the Task Force should analyze.

Ms. Byrne mentioned that the term "metropolitan area" is used in other counties to identify cities and their surrounding areas. She suggested that the Task Force use this term. Ms. Williams informed the Task Force that the entire County of Lancaster has been designated a metropolitan area according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

## Strategic Planning Workshop:

A. **Multi-municipal Planning and Urban Strategy:** Mr. Beam stated that multi-municipal planning is a Smart Growth tool offered through the State's Municipalities Planning Code to encourage municipal collaboration and cooperation. He mentioned that multi-municipal planning affords communities many benefits that can help promote strong urban centers, create coherent suburban communities, preserve open space and agricultural land, and foster economic growth. Mr. Beam informed the Task Force that Lancaster County has been very supportive of multi-municipal planning and currently, there are 11 multi-municipal plans adopted or underway in the County. He introduced the first panel of speakers:

- Karen Weibel, Chair of the Lititz Planning Commission, who discussed the Lititz/Warwick Joint Strategic Plan;
- Nancy Halliwell, Manager of Rapho Township, who discussed the effort underway to pursue an Update to the Manheim Central Regional Plan; and
- John Ahlfeld, Executive Director, of the Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee (LIMC), who discussed the LIMC plan, *Growing Together*, which involves 11 municipalities - the largest multi-municipal plan in the state.

### Questions / Responses & Comments:

- 1) How responsive can a municipality be to change?

The real issue boils down to zoning. It also depends on the municipality's spirit of cooperation. The municipality must keep the lines of communication open.

- 2) How confident are you that your plan will be read by citizens?

Select a consultant who has the ability to engage the public. Be sure there are implementation strategies that can help solicit community engagement. Use the planning process as an opportunity to educate and inform the public.

Public input around the Manheim Central Plan was limited by technology. Today there are various methods of soliciting community participation, many involving technology. – Web sites and email for example.

A Charette and public meetings are always good sources for generating community participation.

- 3) Does Mr. Zimmerman have anything to add relative to the Lititz – Warwick Joint Strategic Plan?

Yes; it is important to underscore that 40 separate objectives were established and achieved under the Lititz – Warwick Joint Strategic Plan.

**B. Local Tools to Promote Agriculture:**

Mr. Beam introduced the next panel:

- Dan Zimmerman, Manager of Warwick Township, who discussed the Warwick's Transfer of Development Rights Program;
- Rich Doenges, Executive Director, Lancaster County's Agricultural Preserve Board, who discussed the Agricultural Preservation Program and the progress the program has made in preserving farmland; and
- Karen Martynick, Executive Director, Lancaster Farmland Trust, who discussed efforts made by the Farmland Trust to preserve farmland.

**Questions / Responses & Comments:**

- 1) Will the Farmland Trust preserve land anywhere?

No; the Farmland Trust does not preserve farms within growth areas.

- 2) Did Chester County ever undertake any studies to determine how much has been expended on development in terms of infrastructure and related costs, compared to what that county would have saved had a preservation program been in place?

No; Chester County did not undertake such a study. However, there are Cost of Community Services Studies to show how much residential growth occurred compared to agricultural designated areas or industrial/commercial areas. Also it is known that Chester County has spent \$125 million on open space preservation and Montgomery County has spent approximately \$170 million on open space preservation. With an agricultural preservation program and good zoning both of these counties could have saved part of these costs.

In terms of Cost of Community Studies, one is now underway for two school districts in Lancaster County, namely Warwick and Lampeter-Strasburg.

- 3) What are the incentives for a farmer moving a business off the farm?

Covenants that run with the land are the primary incentive. The County, through the Agricultural Preserve Board, has the obligation to monitor these covenants. It can take legal means to enforce them through an injunction to insure compliance. However the Agricultural Preserve Board prefers to work with the land owner, hoping the farmer will voluntarily follow the requirements of the covenant. Also, the Farmland Trust monitors the farms which they preserve on an annual basis.

Farmers may be paying more for farms because they will make money from non-agricultural businesses.

It is important to allow some accessory businesses.

Amish farms appear viable.

A comment was made encouraging growth boundaries to be fixed in order to help insure that growth is steered, now and in the future, to the appropriate locations that can accommodate the growth.

The County has Designated Growth Areas, should it also have Designated Preserved Areas? Warwick Township pointed out that they do have a designated preserve area. In terms of the greater County, municipalities in a way designate preserve areas through effective zoning.

- 4) What is the sustainability of agricultural preservation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation?

When you preserve land, you are taking away part of the value of that land so the land should be more affordable to the next generation. Additionally, Dan Zimmerman mentioned freezing mill rates which recognizes the benefits of keeping land designated for agricultural use.

- 5) What is Ag Security Area? What is the average cost paid?

An Ag Security Area is a voluntary designation that landowners can petition the township to accept. It can provide protection from nuisance lawsuits and condemnation, and it acknowledges that the land owner is eligible to apply to participate in a preservation program.

\$230 – \$240k per farm; the average farm is 85 acres.

- 6) What is the cost of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)?

The appraised value.

- 7) Will we ever get to a point where programs like TDRs are self-funded?

168,000 acres are in ag security; 57,000 acres are preserved. Therefore it is unlikely that we will ever stop spending money on agricultural preservation as long as we want to preserve Lancaster County's quality of life.

### **C. Loudoun County, Virginia's Rural Strategy:**

Mr. Beam introduced Louis Nichols, Loudoun County's Senior Agricultural Economy Manager, and Warren Howell, Loudoun County's Agricultural Marketing Manager. He stated that they would share a PowerPoint Presentation and discuss the Loudoun County, Virginia's Rural Strategy.



## Questions and Answers:

- 1) Has there been a study of how County's program affected the economy?

Direct product study shows an increase of 45% in five years. Increase in farms on tour and those offering products. Increase in sales over time. Community recognizes importance and value of farms.

- 2) Does Loudoun County have effective ag zoning?

1/20 and 1/50 zones. Niche crops are driven by what the tourists will buy.

- 3) Are there any restrictions on large animal operations?

Yes and no; Loudoun County has a very broad definition of what is agriculture. What is economically viable generally controls it.

- 4) How is rural zone defined?

On Loudoun County's zoning map rural zoning is designated as Rural Policy Areas. The zoning ordinance defines the uses and performance standards that these areas must meet. Allowable uses include: agriculture, rural business as defined and with criteria, Bed & Breakfasts, larger inns, the more acres the more impact allowed, agricultural research, and corporate retreats.

- 5) The new entrepreneurial farmer is looking at smaller acreages to do a lot of high production farming. Does that conflict with regulations that require a minimal lot size for farms?

Minimum of 5 acres to qualify as agricultural use for tax purposes.

In Virginia the county government has a lot of authority. Working with one jurisdiction makes it simpler for land owners.

Loudoun County's Rural Strategy Team consists of a number of senior staff. The two who made today's presentation provided LCPC with an electronic copy their PowerPoint presentation. A hard copy of that presentation will be distributed in the Growth Management Update Task Force's meeting materials for the September meeting.

**The workshop extended until 1:00 pm and was videotaped in its entirety. Critical highlights of the tape will be shared with the Task Force and the consultant for discussion and analysis purposes later in the process.**